

In the Matter of:

Highfalls Post Office, NC, 27259

Docket No. A2012-115

Larry V. Upchurch, Petitioner

PARTICIPANT STATEMENT

1. Petitioner is appealing the Postal Service's Final Determination concerning the Highfalls Post Office. The Final Determination was posted, December 14, 2011.

The Petitioner's reasons for further consideration are based on the facts found in the Final Determination and include the following:

The closing would continue to provide the "maximum degree of effective and regular postal service to the community." *Closing would require customers of the community to go out of their community in order to access all the current services provided by the Highfalls Post Office.*

The community meeting was held on June 10, 2011 between 2:00PM and 3:00PM. The Final Determination states "0 customer(s) attended the meeting." *In fact, twelve customers signed the community meeting roster and other customers wanted to sign the roster but the representatives left prior to the time period established for the meeting. This reflects a "we don't care" attitude regarding the needs of the community. At the meeting, the representatives gave the options available to customers but failed to seek input regarding other options that could be considered to continue service and cut costs. The time of day established for the meeting did not encourage community input since most customers were working at the meeting time. Since community input is a vital part of the process of determining the closing of a post office, the process used at Highfalls was suspect at best and fails to meet the "spirit" of the established process.*

The economic savings stated in the Final Determination do not appear to reflect the actual costs of operating the Highfalls Post Office. *The post office has not paid a Postmaster salary or fringe benefits since the retirement of the Postmaster in 2008. An office this size would not merit a Postmaster position and has operated efficiently with an "officer in charge." The salary associated with the "officer in charge" position is much less than that of a Postmaster. The rent has also been reduced from that stated in the document. I would hope that all efforts would be made for the Final Determination to reflect accurately the facts but again the document fails to meet the expectations of accuracy and honesty.*

In closing, I petition the commission to consider the facts stated in my petition and reverse and return to the Postal Service the closing of the Highfalls Post Office for further consideration. Thank you in advance for providing this process for review.

